7 TIPS ON HOW TO BEGIN DA'WAH

1. WHAT DO YOU KNOW OR THINK ABOUT ISLAAM?

This question should be preceded by other general conversation. For example, ask how long the person has been in the country. If they have been in the country for a long time, this is a suitable question. If they have only just arrived, another approach is required. For example, one could offer to show them around, or invite them to a gathering, etc.

2. CURRENT ISSUES: WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT HIJAAB OR THE WAR IN IRAQ?

Use current issues in the media as a means of discussing about Islaam. If they are open-minded and see the obvious injustice in the Hijaab ban and the Western invasion of Iraq based on non-existent WMDs, then the conversation can be steered to the media distortion of Islaam, etc. If they didn't understand the issues behind the Hijaab or the invasion of Iraq, they should be enlightened briefly and these issues linked to Islaam.

3. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING IN A MUSLIM COUNTRY?

Discuss the differences between being in their country and being here as a means to clarifying misconceptions about Islaam and Muslims. Find out their impressions about Muslims, and correct the negative images. Distinguish between what Muslims do and what they are supposed to do – i.e., Cultural Islaam and Islamic Culture.

4. HOW HAS YOUR IMPRESSION OF QATAR/THE GULF STATES CHANGED SINCE COMING HERE?

Usually Westerners and others have very negative images of this region and its citizens. The technological and social differences are often quite vast. Violence and backwardness are often to two main misconceptions. One may clarify the Islamic stance on violence and terrorism and stress that Islaam encourages scientific advancement. The issue that Islaam was spread mostly in times of peace (e.g., Indonesia) and that the Qur'aan prohibits compulsion in religion are good to relate in this context.

5. ARE YOU RELIGIOUS? WHAT DOES YOUR RELIGION SAY IS THE PURPOSE OF EXISTENCE/CREATION?

Find out the person's spiritual state. If they are religiously committed, then ask them to define, according to their scriptures – not according to their personal opinions, the reason for their existence. Most people have no answer. They never thought about it and their religious teachers and teachings don't spell it out clearly. Here, the clarity of purpose mentioned in the scripture, Qur'aan, may impress them and encourage them to read the Qur'aan. Otherwise, a discussion of purpose would be good.

6. WHY DO YOU WEAR A CROSS? WHY DO YOU KEEP THAT IDOL?

Ask questions about the person's religious symbols in order to introduce Islamic ideas in contrast to what the person believes. The goal being to bring out the false ideas the person holds and to compare them with Islaamic beliefs and practices. Or you may use other people's question to begin discussion. If they ask about your *hijaab* or your

Islaamic cap or gown, use the question to clarify misconceptions or to introduce them to some Islaamic concepts.

7. DISCUSS ISLAAM IN THE PRESENCE OF OTHERS.

If you are traveling with Muslims and sitting among non-Muslims, use the opportunity to discuss about basic Islaamic beliefs for their benefit. For example, one of you asks the others about the difference between God in Islaam and in Christianity. Or, less directly, one asks about the meanings of Soorah al-Faatihah and the others explain it or discuss it.